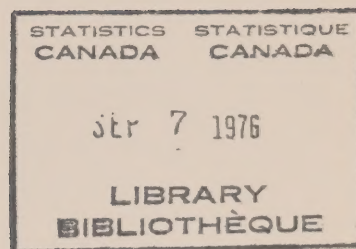


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DISABILITY AMONG THE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED
CANADIAN SICKNESS SURVEY
1950-51

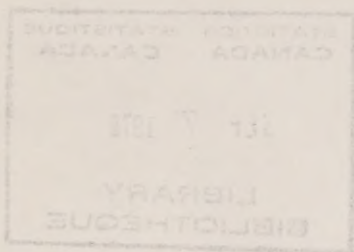


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SYMBOL

The interpretation of the symbol used in the tables throughout this publication is as follows:

-- Reliable estimates not available.

PREFACE

The *Canadian Sickness Survey*, the first nationwide study of illness in the general population of Canada, was carried out during a twelve-month period commencing in the autumn of 1950.

The survey was initiated by the Department of National Health and Welfare and carried out by the ten provincial health departments with federal funds made available to the provinces through the National Health Programme.

The planning and organization of the survey was a joint undertaking of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the Department of National Health and Welfare in consultation with the provinces. Every provincial health department cooperated fully in gathering the extensive body of information which makes these publications possible.

The main findings of the survey were published in *Illness and Health Care in Canada*, a comprehensive report on the survey, and in the eleven bulletins constituting D.B.S. Reference Paper No. 51. The present report contains details of previously published data that were not considered of sufficient general importance to be included in the comprehensive report, but which are of considerable interest to particular users.

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INTRODUCTION

This report attempts to assess the extent of disability among the gainfully employed in Canada. Rates and percentages given are based on the data collected for the 1950-51 *Canadian Sickness Survey*. Estimates below a certain size were not published as they were not considered reliable.

To show the rates and percentages of persons affected and the number of disability days experienced, the following breakdowns were selected:

Various durations of disability—Cumulative; Non-cumulative.

Regions—Eastern Region including Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario; Western Region including Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia.

Areas—Metropolitan; Non-metropolitan.

Industries—Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry (00-09), Manufacturing (20-39), Service (90-94), Other Industries.

Family type—Single, Other family types.

Age—Under 25, 25-44, 45-64, 65 and over.

Sex.

DEFINITIONS

Disability period

A disability period is a series of from one to 365 consecutive days throughout which time a person was reported as continuously away from his usual activity or occupation.

If he was gainfully employed, time included would refer to days during which he was unable to carry out his normal working activities due to ill health, whether or not such days were working days, i.e., weekends and holidays are included for the gainfully employed.

A disability period includes all days from the day the person discontinued his usual activity until the day such activities were resumed, regardless of whether the person was up and around at home or laid up in bed at home or in hospital.

Gainfully employed

A person who pursued an occupation to earn money, or assisted in the operation of a farm or business. Children 14 years of age and over working at home on general household duties or at other odd jobs were excluded. Women homemakers in their own homes not drawing salaries or wages were also excluded. But persons usually employed and not working at the time of the survey were still classified as gainfully employed.

Duration of disability

The period absent from the usual occupation because of ill health and not necessarily the same length of time as the full period of ill health.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Approximately 50% of the gainfully employed persons were found to be without any disability period during the survey year, and about 50% of those who reported disability days stayed away from their usual activities from 1 to 7 days.

The gainfully employed registered **disability rates** for each group ranging from 40.4% to 50.6% for

male employees and from 52.6% to 57.8% for female employees, as against ranges of from 48.5% to 52.8% for all the men and from 51.3% to 59.6% for all the women of the Canadian population.

A comparison of disability days of the gainfully employed with the general population showed the following deviations.

Age and sex	Average number of disability days per person	
	In total population	Among gainfully employed
Both sexes		
All ages	12	8
15-24	8	under 25 7
25-44	9	7
45-64	16	11
65 and over	29	14
Male		
All ages	12	9
15-24	8	under 25 7
25-44	9	7
45-64	17	11
65 and over	29	14
Female		
All ages	12	8
15-24	9	under 25 7
25-44	10	7
45-64	15	9
65 and over	29	9

Disabled persons and extent of disability by age and sex (Table 1)

On the whole women showed a disability rate 7.3 per cent higher than that of men, but Tables 8 and 9 reveal that the average number of disability days per person was lower for women than for men. The age group most frequently affected was 25-44 years for women and 65 years and over for men. The age-sex group with the lowest disability rate was that of men under 25 years of age. In general, short term disability (i.e. up to 30 days) was higher for women, long term disability was higher for men.

Disabled persons and extent of disability by metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas (Table 2)

For the whole of Canada, disability rates were slightly higher in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas.

Disabled persons by region and area (Table 3)

Comparing the provinces, the overall disability rates ranged from 59.9 per cent in British Columbia to 43.2 per cent in Saskatchewan. In metropolitan areas the disability rates per person gainfully employed ranged from 9.1 per cent over the national average in British Columbia to 3.1 per cent under the national average in Ontario. For non-metropolitan areas the disability rates per person gainfully employed ranged from 11.1 per cent over the nation-

al average in British Columbia to 11.3 per cent under the national average in Saskatchewan. The reasons for these differences might have been detected by scrutinizing the reporting system, comparing age and sex groups, and checking transportation facilities for the gainfully employed by regions. The limited information of this one-time survey, however, did not provide sufficient material to carry out this analysis.

Disabled persons by industry, age and sex (Table 4)

This table showed that in general the number of persons in various industry groups reporting disability periods increased with age. Exceptions were noted for men 45-64 years old employed in manufacturing and service industries, and for women of the 25-44 year age groups employed in all other industries except agriculture, fishing, forestry, manufacturing and service. However, the information on gainfully employed women in various industries remained vague since out of 20 categories 12 had to be omitted because the sample was too small to be reliable.

Disabled persons by industry region and area (Table 5)

The cross-classification of industries by region and area showed the highest disability rate for employees of the Quebec non-metropolitan area manufacturing industry, where disability periods were

registered by 65 per cent of the gainfully employed. The lowest rate was shown for Ontario metropolitan manufacturing industries where 38.5 per cent of persons gainfully employed reported disabilities.

Disabled persons by family type, age and sex (Table 6)

Single person families showed a smaller disability rate for men than for women. Within the sex groups more single women employees reported disability periods than those of other family types. The table revealed an opposite tendency for gainfully employed men.

Disabled persons by family type, region and area (Table 7)

Cross-classification of family types by areas revealed a lower disability rate for the single person family type in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas. For persons of other family types the disability rate for all of Canada was higher in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas, though the situation varied from one province to another.

Disability days per person by industry, age and sex (Tables 8 and 9)

The average number of disability days per gainfully employed person was 1.2 days less for women than for men. Average disability days per gainfully employed (of all age groups) were lowest for women occupied in manufacturing and highest for men in the residual category of all other industries.

The average number of disability days per gainfully employed person with disability days was 4.4 days less for women than for men. A difference of 7.1 disability days could be noted between women employed in manufacturing and men employed in the residual category "all other industries". The highest average number of disability days per person gainfully employed was 28.5 and was reported by men aged 65 and over, the lowest average was 11.8 and was recorded for persons of both sexes ages 25 to 44 in the manufacturing industries.

Disability days per person by industry, region and area (Tables 10 and 11)

Quebec non-metropolitan areas reported a higher average number of disability days per gainfully employed person than any other region.

Agriculture, fishing and forestry in Quebec reported the highest average number of disability days per temporarily disabled gainfully employed person for any industry in any area. The lowest average was 11.5 disability days per temporarily disabled gainfully employed person and was registered for the manufacturing industries in the metropolitan areas of Western Canada.

Regional differences

It is not possible to ascertain to what extent the regional differences were due to real differences in the geographical and social characteristics of the various regions, or to sampling and non-sampling errors. However it cannot be over-emphasized that the regional differences in the tables of this report are not necessarily real differences.

TABLES

TABLE 1. Percentage of Gainfully Employed Persons with Various Numbers of Disability Days by Age and Sex

Age and sex	Total em- ployed	Persons with the following number of disability days													
		None	1-7 days	8-14 days	15-30 days	1 or more	2 or more	3 or more	4 or more	5 or more	6 or more	7 or more	15 or more	22 or more	31 or more
Both sexes	100.0	49.6	27.4	9.8	7.2	50.4	45.9	40.9	36.3	32.9	29.2	26.5	13.1	8.9	5.9
Under 25	100.0	50.5	27.7	9.9	7.6	49.5	45.5	40.5	35.4	31.9	27.9	25.7	11.9	7.5	--
25-44	100.0	49.4	30.0	9.6	6.4	50.6	45.2	39.8	34.8	31.0	27.1	24.2	11.0	7.1	4.6
45-64	100.0	49.6	24.5	10.2	7.4	50.4	46.9	42.0	38.4	35.2	31.7	29.1	15.7	11.2	8.2
65 and over	100.0	48.9	19.7	--	--	51.1	47.9	45.6	41.8	40.1	38.0	35.3	22.0	--	--
Male	100.0	51.0	26.4	9.8	6.8	49.0	44.8	39.8	35.6	32.2	28.6	26.1	12.8	8.8	6.0
Under 25	100.0	54.7	24.7	9.6	--	45.4	42.7	38.5	34.3	31.7	26.8	24.5	11.0	--	3.8
25-44	100.0	50.6	29.2	9.7	6.2	49.4	44.0	38.5	34.1	30.1	26.3	23.4	10.5	6.7	4.3
45-64	100.0	49.9	24.2	10.1	7.2	50.1	46.6	41.6	37.7	34.7	31.5	29.2	15.9	11.6	8.6
65 and over	100.0	49.4	--	--	--	50.6	47.4	45.0	41.5	39.8	38.1	35.5	21.3	--	--
Female	100.0	43.7	32.1	9.6	9.0	56.3	50.8	45.8	39.4	35.7	31.7	28.5	14.5	9.5	5.5
Under 25	100.0	43.1	33.1	--	--	56.9	50.5	43.9	37.4	33.4	30.0	27.9	--	--	--
25-44	100.0	42.2	34.9	--	--	57.8	51.9	47.6	39.0	36.0	32.1	28.4	--	--	--
45-64	100.0	47.4	--	--	--	52.6	49.3	45.4	43.3	38.7	33.0	--	--	--	--
65 and over	100.0	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

TABLE 2. Percentage of Gainfully Employed Persons with Various Number of Disability Days by Metropolitan and Non-Metropolitan Area

Area	Total	Persons with the following number of disability days										
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	5-14	15-30	31+
Canada	100.0	49.6	4.5	5.0	4.6	3.5	3.7	2.7	3.5	9.8	7.2	5.9
Metropolitan	100.0	51.2	4.9	5.1	5.0	3.1	3.9	2.2	3.6	9.0	6.3	5.7
Non-metropolitan	100.0	48.2	4.1	4.9	4.1	3.8	3.5	3.1	3.5	10.6	8.1	6.1

TABLE 3. Percentage¹ of Gainfully Employed Persons with Disability Days by Region and Area

Region	Total	Metropolitan area	Non-metropolitan area
Canada	50.4	48.8	51.8
Newfoundland	--	--	--
Prince Edward Island	--	--	--
Nova Scotia	54.8	--	57.2
New Brunswick	53.9	--	53.2
Quebec	54.8	48.8	61.1
Ontario	46.7	45.7	47.9
Manitoba	46.5	55.9	--
Saskatchewan	43.2	--	40.5
Alberta	43.7	--	46.3
British Columbia	59.9	57.9	62.9

¹ Total employed in each region and in each area = 100%.

TABLE 4. Percentage¹ of Gainfully Employed Persons with Disability Days by Industry, Age and Sex

Age and sex	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Both sexes	50.4	48.4	48.3	51.2	52.7
Under 25	49.5	43.7	49.0	51.8	52.9
25-44	50.6	49.3	48.5	52.9	51.8
45-64	50.4	50.0	48.1	48.7	53.2
65 and over	51.1	--	--	--	--
Male	49.0	48.4	47.4	46.6	51.5
Under 25	45.4	44.1	44.1	--	48.1
25-44	49.4	49.6	48.4	47.4	50.7
45-64	50.1	49.7	48.3	46.0	53.2
65 and over	50.6	--	--	--	--
Female	56.3	--	52.2	57.7	58.7
Under 25	56.9	--	56.0	55.6	60.0
25-44	57.8	--	--	62.8	59.2
45-64	52.6	--	--	--	--
65 and over	--	--	--	--	--

¹ Total employed in each age-group and in each industry group = 100%.TABLE 5. Percentage¹ of Gainfully Employed Persons with Disability Days by Industry, Region and Area

Region and area	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Canada	50.4	48.4	48.3	51.2	52.7
Metropolitan	48.8	--	44.6	50.3	51.5
Non-metropolitan	51.8	48.7	54.1	52.6	54.6
Ontario	46.7	47.0	39.6	47.6	52.7
Metropolitan	45.7	--	38.5	46.4	52.4
Non-metropolitan	47.9	46.8	41.7	50.2	53.3
Quebec	54.8	59.9	54.1	56.3	52.1
Metropolitan	48.8	--	46.3	55.9	48.2
Non-metropolitan	61.1	61.1	65.0	--	58.5
Western	49.4	41.3	57.6	51.8	53.2
Metropolitan	53.4	--	58.1	51.0	53.8
Non-metropolitan	46.5	41.6	--	--	52.1
Eastern	53.0	52.9	--	50.5	53.2
Metropolitan	51.3	--	--	--	--
Non-metropolitan	53.6	53.3	--	--	54.9

¹ Total employed in each industry group and in each area = 100%.

**TABLE 6. Percentage¹ of Gainfully Employed Persons with Disability Days
by Family Type, Age and Sex**

Age and sex	Single person family	All other families
Both sexes	50.6	50.3
Under 25	--	49.1
25 - 44	53.0	50.4
45 - 64	48.0	50.9
65 and over	48.4	51.9
Male	44.3	49.4
Under 25	--	45.2
25 - 44	--	49.7
45 - 64	--	50.6
65 and over	--	52.4
Female	58.5	55.6
Under 25	--	56.6
25 - 44	--	55.6
45 - 64	--	53.7
65 and over	--	--

¹ Total employees in each family type and in each age group = 100%.

**TABLE 7. Percentage¹ of Gainfully Employed Persons with Disability Days
by Family Type, Region and Area**

Region and area	Single person family	All other families
Canada	50.6	50.3
Metropolitan	52.2	48.3
Non-metropolitan	48.7	52.1
Ontario	42.4	47.1
Metropolitan	--	46.0
Non-metropolitan	--	48.6
Quebec	59.4	54.3
Metropolitan	--	47.4
Non-metropolitan	--	61.5
Western	53.9	48.9
Metropolitan	--	52.8
Non-metropolitan	--	46.1
Eastern	--	53.6
Metropolitan	--	52.0
Non-metropolitan	--	54.2

¹ Total employees in each family type and in each region and area = 100%.

**TABLE 8. Average Number of Disability Days per Gainfully Employed Person
by Industry, Age and Sex**

Age and sex	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Both sexes	8.5	8.4	7.3	8.4	9.5
Under 25	6.9	5.9	6.9	6.4	7.7
25-44	7.1	7.5	5.5	7.2	8.2
45-64	11.0	11.2	9.9	10.7	11.6
65 and over	13.6	9.9	15.6	10.0	19.1
Male	8.7	8.5	7.6	8.5	9.9
Under 25	6.7	6.0	6.5	--	7.9
25-44	7.1	7.6	5.6	6.9	8.1
45-64	11.3	11.3	10.2	11.4	11.9
65 and over	14.4	10.0	16.4	--	20.2
Female	7.5	--	6.3	8.1	8.0
Under 25	7.2	--	7.4	7.0	7.4
25-44	7.2	--	4.5	7.7	9.0
45-64	8.6	--	--	9.5	--
65 and over	--	--	--	--	--

**TABLE 9. Average Number of Disability Days per Person with Disability Days Gainfully Employed
by Industry, Age and Sex**

Age and sex	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Both sexes	16.9	17.4	15.2	16.4	18.1
Under 25	13.9	13.5	14.0	12.4	14.5
25-44	14.1	15.3	11.3	13.6	15.8
45-64	21.7	22.5	20.6	22.1	21.8
65 and over	26.7	--	--	--	--
Male	17.8	17.6	16.0	18.3	19.1
Under 25	14.7	13.6	14.7	--	16.4
25-44	14.5	15.4	11.6	14.7	15.9
45-64	22.5	22.7	21.2	24.8	22.4
65 and over	28.5	--	--	--	--
Female	13.4	--	12.0	14.1	13.6
Under 25	12.6	--	13.2	12.7	12.3
25-44	12.5	--	--	12.3	15.1
45-64	16.4	--	--	--	--
65 and over	--	--	--	--	--

**TABLE 10. Average Number of Disability Days per Gainfully Employed Person
by Industry, Region and Area**

Region and area	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Canada	8.5	8.4	7.3	8.4	9.5
Metropolitan	8.1	--	5.7	8.8	9.3
Non-metropolitan	8.9	8.3	9.9	7.7	9.9
Ontario	8.0	7.4	6.2	9.1	9.5
Metropolitan	7.9	--	4.5	9.9	10.1
Non-metropolitan	8.3	7.4	9.5	7.3	8.7
Quebec	10.5	14.0	8.3	9.4	11.3
Metropolitan	8.8	--	6.2	9.5	10.0
Non-metropolitan	12.4	13.4	11.2	9.1	13.4
Western	6.9	5.6	7.1	6.9	8.1
Metropolitan	7.4	--	6.7	6.3	8.2
Non-metropolitan	6.5	5.5	7.8	7.8	7.8
Eastern	9.0	9.5	10.4	7.4	8.8
Metropolitan	8.6	--	--	--	7.5
Non-metropolitan	9.1	9.7	9.3	6.7	9.7

**TABLE 11. Average Number of Disability Days per Gainfully Employed Person
Reporting Disability Days by Industry, Region and Area**

Region and area	All industries	Agriculture, forestry, fishing	Manufacturing	Service	All other industries
Canada	16.9	17.4	15.2	16.4	18.1
Metropolitan	16.6	--	12.7	17.5	18.1
Non-metropolitan	17.2	17.0	18.4	14.6	18.1
Ontario	17.2	15.7	15.6	19.0	18.1
Metropolitan	17.2	--	11.7	21.4	19.2
Non-metropolitan	17.3	15.9	22.7	14.6	16.3
Quebec	19.2	23.3	15.3	16.7	21.6
Metropolitan	18.0	--	13.3	17.1	20.7
Non-metropolitan	20.2	21.9	17.3	--	22.8
Western	13.9	13.4	12.3	13.3	15.1
Metropolitan	13.8	--	11.5	12.4	15.3
Non-metropolitan	13.9	13.3	--	--	14.9
Eastern	16.9	18.0	--	14.6	16.5
Metropolitan	16.8	--	--	--	--
Non-metropolitan	16.9	18.1	--	--	17.7

BACKGROUND

The Canadian Sickness Survey, 1950-51

The object of the *Canadian Sickness Survey* was to obtain estimates of the incidence and prevalence of illness and accidents of all kinds; the amount of medical, nursing and other health care received; the volume of family expenditures for the various types of health services; and the prevalence of permanent physical disabilities.

The survey method consisted of personal visits by trained lay enumerators—in British Columbia the enumerators were public health nurses—to a sample of approximately 10,000 households (approximately 33,000 persons) distributed throughout the ten provinces in metropolitan, small urban, and rural areas.¹ Less than five per cent of these households refused to participate in the survey. Of the remaining households over 80 per cent of the individuals involved remained in the sample throughout the survey period. All information, including particulars of income, housing, and environment, was obtained by direct interview of a household informant, usually the housewife. While the starting date for the survey varied somewhat in different provinces, in most cases a total of 14 monthly visits were made to each household in the sample. In the first visit the enumerator introduced the survey and left a special calendar designed to help the informant keep a detailed day-to-day record of current sickness and of expenditures on health care and services for each member of the household. During each of the succeeding twelve months the enumerator interviewed the informant and recorded the sickness experienced by each person since the previous visit. The final visit was made to review the information recorded throughout the whole survey period. Uniformity of practice in the ten provinces was maintained by frequent consultation among the agencies involved, by uniform instructions to the enumerators, and by the use of three standard record forms—a Household Record, an Individual Sickness Record, and an Expenditures Form. Auxiliary schedules, also standardized, were used to record permanent physical disabilities and also health services which were desired but not obtained.

¹ The population sampled did not include residents of institutions, military establishments, Indian reservations, and remote areas.

The sample was designed to obtain estimates within a sampling error of 20 per cent.² Indications are that for almost all of the estimates the error is substantially smaller. Area sampling was used for the survey. As a first stage the following six domains (regions) of study were established consisting of four single provinces and two groups of three provinces each:

1. Newfoundland.
2. Maritimes (including Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick).
3. Quebec.
4. Ontario.
5. Prairies (including Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta).
6. British Columbia.

Within each domain three types of area were considered—metropolitan, urban, and rural. Within these areas multi-stage sampling was adopted. In metropolitan centres, all of which were included in the sample, and in some of the sampled urban areas, the first stage of sampling was the block, the second stage being the household. In other urban areas systematic sampling from a list of households was used. Rural areas were divided into primary sampling units and grouped into strata. Within each stratum one primary sampling unit was selected and multi-stage sampling applied. The first stage was the selection of clusters or segments within the primary sampling unit while the second stage was the selection of households within the chosen clusters.

In designing the sample extensive use was made of population, social, and economic data obtained from 1941 Census material. The results of the 1951 Census, which was taken at about mid-point of the survey period, provided the necessary distributions concerning persons and families for the calculation of weights used to inflate figures to national and provincial totals. The basic survey units for data on illness were individual persons, while the units for expenditures on health services included families, as defined in the census, together with certain single persons living alone or with other families as roomers or relatives.

² With a 95 per cent confidence limit.

PROCESSING OF DATA

Population Universe

The population universe from which the sample for the Canadian Sickness Survey was drawn consisted of the total population of Canada minus persons residing in institutions, military establishments, Indian reservations, and remote areas.³ This popu-

lation universe, estimated at 13,540,000, was calculated from the total population of Canada, as recorded in the 1951 Census, with appropriate adjustments for the excluded sections of the population.

Sample

The estimates given in this bulletin were calculated from data obtained from a sample of about 33,000 persons, most of whom were reported on for

³ The remote areas consisted of Labrador, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, and the northernmost stretches of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

the entire survey year. A few persons who were absent from the survey for less than 31 days were also included in the sample. Persons who were born or who died during the survey year, but were otherwise not absent from the survey for more than 30 days, were included in the sample.

An appropriate small downward adjustment was made to estimates of numbers of persons—as distinct from numbers of units of health care—recorded in the tables of this bulletin, in order to compensate for partial absence from the survey of some persons. In other words, all estimates pertain to the experience of persons during the survey year.

Estimating

The total sample was broken down into cells, by a division into provinces, areas (metropolitan and non-metropolitan) within provinces, and age-sex groups (five male and five female age groups) within

areas. The total population of each cell was taken from the 1951 Census, with appropriate adjustments for excluded sections of the population. For each cell the ratio of total population to sample population was used as a weight and applied to all sample data pertaining to the cell. Weighted figures for the various cells were appropriately combined to provide the published estimates.

Sampling Error

The standard of statistical accuracy set in this bulletin for estimates concerning numbers of persons was a maximum sampling error of 20 per cent.⁴ To achieve this standard each published figure had to be based on a certain minimum frequency of persons in the sample.

⁴ With a 95 per cent confidence limit; i.e., no individual figure was allowed a chance greater than one in 20 of exceeding the 20 per cent margin of error.

